

# HISTORY OF ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

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History  
of  
St. Michael's  
Parish

by Anna Ellis Harper

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To  
the late Ethel Armes  
author of  
Stratford Hall  
The Great House of the Lees





## FOREWORD

The Old Testament story of the crossing of the Red Sea by the Hebrews fleeing from slavery in Egypt concludes with the building of an Altar of twelve stones; and Joshua, the leader, asks this significant question, "What do you mean by these stones?" Mrs. Crittenden Harper by her diligent research through the early Vestry minutes of St. Michael's Parish, the Talbot County Court House records of wills and property deeds, has given new meaning and life to "these stones" which tell the story of a commonplace parish church in a small out of the way village on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

Here, in this village parish that dates back into the third quarter of the 17th century, are some small incidents that had wide effect upon the affairs of state and church. Within the boundaries of this parish lived the Lloyd and Goldsborough families, whose names and fame are classics in the life of the nation. In this village were built a number of the Baltimore Clipper sailing vessels that changed the ways of commerce upon the high seas, especially in the China trade, for the young United States. Matthew Tilghman of Rich Neck Manor, a Vestryman, was one of the laymen attending a Council of the Church that met in Emmanuel Church, Chestertown, where the name Protestant Episcopal Church was first mentioned, and later represented the Church of Maryland at the organizing meetings of the First General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in Philadelphia. Other men of consequence, military and naval, went forth from this village parish to leave their names and deeds upon history's records.

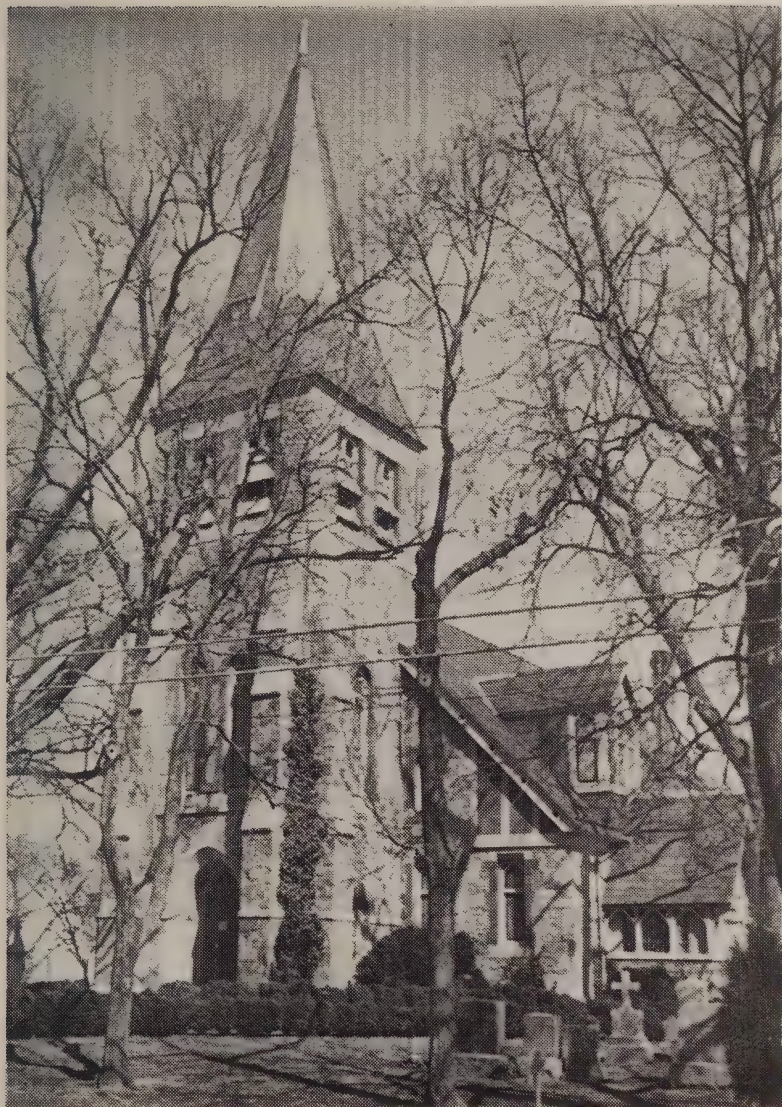
'Tis a small parish, indeed; but its stones set up these past ages, tell a story well worth our reading.

Paul F. Williams, Rector

St. Michaels Parish

St. Michaels, Md.





**Christ Church, St. Michael's Parish, built 1878.**

The porch at the south entrance is a memorial to its builder, Captain Daniel Feddeman. His remains rest close beside it.





## CHAPTER ONE

### THE RECORD OF THE FIRST CHURCH AND THE BUILDER

In the early years of the Maryland Province when the first settlers were laying out their grants of land, a Protestant Church was established on St. Michaels river. After nearly three centuries of continuous use, a fourth Church edifice stands upon the hallowed site, Christ Protestant Episcopal Church of Saint Michael's Parish. Its beginning is so closely associated with the early patentees and their land holdings that no record of the Church would be complete without a description of the characters of the men and women whose names appear upon the first Vestry records. Their lives, ambitions and religious faith were the foundations upon which the early Church was built.

Maryland was not a Royal Province, as Virginia was, under the jurisdiction of the King of England, but the land, extending from the south shore of the Potomac River to the 40th parallel, was granted to the first Lord Baltimore, George Calvert. He died before the Charter passed the seal. It was then issued to Cecilius, his son and heir, who became the founder of Maryland. In a little more than a decade after the first settlement was made at St. Mary's, 1634, Cecilius Calvert turned his attention to the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay.

At that early date the harbor at St. Michaels was referred to in old record as "Shipping Creek." It is evident that, even then, there was trading with Indians in furs, tobacco and staves (lum-

ber). One of the first adventurers must have appreciated the advantages and beauty of "Shipping Creek," its high points and deep coves and he, John Hollingsworth, patented, 1664, fifty acres of land close around its shore.<sup>1</sup> This he appropriately named "The Beach" for at that time there was a sandy beach at the edge of the water. "The Beach" had an important bearing upon the location and erection of the first church. This fair piece of wild land, perhaps thickly wooded, enclosing a deep harbor, knew several owners within a few years. From Hollingsworth it was conveyed to William Hambleton of "Martingham," 1668, "with the consent of my wife Jane and with these presents (I) do warrant the peaceable and quiet possession of the land."<sup>2</sup> A certain William Vincent then owned it and he conveyed "The Beach" to Humphrey Davenport who traded extensively in both land and tobacco.

From Scotland, 1667, there came to Talbot County an adventurer and trader whose name was destined to go down through the years with honor. He was Edward Elliott. From fragmentary records, it appears that he and his son-in-law, James Auld,<sup>3</sup> were the first patentees of land bordering both shores of "Deep Water Creek" (Long Haul) and named by them "Elliott's Folly." Later Auld was granted "Dover Point" (Deep Water Point) and he came into possession of part of "Elliott's Folly" which he re-named "New Port Glasgow."<sup>4</sup>

In 1677, Elliott acquired from Humphrey Davenport, Doctor of phisick, for 8000 pounds of tobacco land known as the "Beach" 50 A. He also bought at this time "Davenport" 200 A. "running down the river 180 perches for 40,000 pounds."

"Davenport" is the Perry Cabin Farm of the present.<sup>5</sup>

Elliott was now 27 years old. Though he could not read or

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1. Patents, Land Records Annapolis

2. Land Records, Easton L. 1, f. 72

3. Early Settlers, L. 15, f. 396, Annapolis

4. Rent Roll, Annapolis

5. Land Records, L. 3, f. 98, Easton



write, using two printed E's (E E) as his mark or signature, he soon became a man of influence, serving as Deputy High Sheriff of Talbot County. According to the custom of his time he was a planter and trader and, in legal documents, he styled himself a carpenter.

Within a decade after his arrival, probably when he purchased the land, he selected a site for a church, since the shores of both the Choptank and St. Michaels rivers were being settled during these first years of the Restoration in England. At the head of a deep narrow cove, making in from "Shipping Creek," with the aid of a man, in all likelihood an indentured servant, he built the first Church edifice on "The Beach." This cove is mentioned in later land conveyances as "Church Cove." It is regrettable that it was used during 1800's as a place for debris until it became an undesirable anchorage for ships. After having been filled in this historic cove is now the location of a town office building, a modern fire-house with parking lot and a beautiful park bordering on the Harbor. The park has been called "Church Cove Park," thus perpetuating the name.

According to tradition large ships anchored in Church Cove for the water then was deep. Worshippers came to church in their boats from their homes along the river and landed on the Church yard. Residents of the present time remember only a narrow path behind the Church at high tide. That the Church yard extended to the water is indicated by the minutes of a Vestry meeting Apr. 5th, 1731:

"The Vestry this day agreed to allow James Spencer 10 pounds sterling for paling three sides of the Church yard and making a gate at the south side."

The exact date of the erection of the first edifice cannot be ascertained as the earliest Vestry record is dated Tuesday, March 5, 1731. Elliott acquired the land in 1677 and no doubt built the church soon after its purchase. It was most likely of log construction and was used no longer than fifty years, since in 1736

in depositions made in Court, it was referred to as the old Church. <sup>6</sup>

Though other planters, religiously inclined, might have assisted in the establishment of a place of worship, it is interesting to follow the activities of Elliott, the first builder, through documents preserved among the Talbot land records. To his "Beach" and "Davenport," he added part of "Elliott's Folly," 1685, "lying south of a west line drawn from the head of Deep Water Creek." "Elliott's Addition" was then resurveyed: "Thomas Smithson, surveyor, does certify that he surveyed the ancient tract of 200 A. for Edward Elliott, 1687." Incidentally this is the Thomas Smithson who by his last will and testament, 1713, bequeathed to St. Michael's Parish the glebe lands through which passes the Glebe road, the original road to Talbot Court House, from Bay Hundred. <sup>7</sup>

Elliott's land now was adjacent to "Rolle's Range," "Crooked Intention" and after "Harley" (Parrott's Point) was transferred to him, 1691, by George Blades, the Hattons were his neighbors on the south. From his vast acres he had a wide view of St. Michaels river and its enchanting beauty. Strange, indeed, it is that the Indian name of this wide river, abounding in food has never been discovered by local historians. It is evident that it received its name from the charter of the early patents in respect to the day on which the rent was to be paid: "To be holden of Us and Our heirs as of Our Mannour of Baltimore . . . and paying therefore yearley unto to Us and Our heirs at Our Receipt at St. Maries at the two most usual feasts in the year Viz't at the feast of the Annunciation of the blessed Virgin Mary and the feast of St. Michael, the Archangell." During the 1660's and 1670's, both shores of the river were granted to new settlers. Among them were William Hambleton, James Auld, Humphrey Davenport and Edward Elliott. Others were Charles Hollingsworth of "Maiden Point," James Benson and Robert Newcomb on "Harbor Rouse" (Oak Creek) and across the river were Henry Morgan and

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6. Land Records Easton, L. 14, f. 173

7. Talbot Rent Roll

Henry Hawkins patenting "Morgan's Hope" and "Hope." All of these were required to pay their rents to Cecilius Calvert, Sept. 29th, the feast of St. Michael. <sup>8</sup>

When, upon the accession of William and Mary to the throne of England, the authority of the Proprietary was again overthrown, an Act was passed for the establishment of the Protestant Religion in the Province and an order was issued to lay out parishes in the various Counties of Maryland. The western part of Talbot, from the Court House to Skipton Creek, embracing the St. Michaels and part of Wye Rivers constituted St. Michael's Parish. The Parish evidently was named for the river. A hundred years later a village clustered about the Church and its name was taken from the Parish. <sup>9</sup>

A document marked "Bonds, 1664-1709" and kept among the records of the Register of Wills, Talbot County, yielded two important pieces of information concerning Edward Elliott, that Elizabeth, his wife was the widow of Henry Frith, (or Firth) and that he and Elizabeth owed the Proprietary 64000 lb. of good, sound tobacco in caske. Thus he appears to have been a man of unusual business ability, for he not only built up a large plantation, but engaged in trading as well. Facts gleaned from the records disclose a man of influence in the new settlement in the newly erected County.

Elliott's children were Sarah, the wife of James Auld; Mary who married Nicholas Lurkey; Susannah who first married William Hopkins and secondly Thomas Ashcroft of Virginia; Elizabeth, wife of Richard Feddeman, and Edward, who married Mary Haddaway (nee Bridges), widow of Peter Haddaway. Through these marriages his descendants are numerous and among them are many prominent men and women, some of whom are active in the Church at the present time.

For some unknown reason, or presumably for no other motive than his devotion to his daughter, Edward Elliott transferred

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8. Early Land Patents, Annapolis

9. Arch. L.H.D. f. 21

by deed to Susannah and her husband, William Hopkins, 1704, all his holdings in land on St. Michaels river. The indenture of this deed of gift is written in quaint English and throws light upon his plantation in the early years of 1700. The improvements are listed and it is surprising that so much had been accomplished within twenty-five years: <sup>10</sup>

“Know yee that I, Edward Elliott of Talbot County in ye Province of Maryland for and in consideration of ye paternal love and affecon that I have and doe bear toward my well beloved son-in-law and daughter, William Hopkins and Susannah his wife hath given and granted and by these presents doe give and grant, enfeoff release and confirm unto them the said William Hopkins and Susannah his wife my now dwelling plantation situate lying and being on the south side of St. Michaels river containing by estimacon 476 A. being the same more or less. Together with all and singular dwelling houses, out houses, tobacco houses, orchards, gardens, fences and all and singular woods and wood grounds trees and timber in or upon said land . . . To have and to hold to them the said William Hopkins and Susannah, his wife forever. And I ye Donor doe further covenant and agree with the Donees by these presents in manner and form following that is to say that if the said William Hopkins shall die before the said Susannah that it shall be lawful for the said Susannah to dispose of the said land and premises to any son or sons whatsoever without the Lot Suite trouble molestacon or hindrance of any of the heirs of the said William Hopkins.”

He added that he and Elizabeth (his wife) were to have use of the plantation house. Susannah Hopkins was now one of the largest land holders in Talbot County and she, like her father, was active in affairs of church and property.

Six years later, 1710, William Hopkins died, survived by two

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10. Talbot Land Records, L. 9, f. 262

sons, John and Edward and a daughter, Anne. To them he bequeathed his plantation on Third Haven Creek, which was located in the Neck or Peninsula still known as Hopkins Neck. Very soon Susannah married a second husband, Thomas Ashcroft, of Virginia. One daughter, Elizabeth, was born to them who married Joseph Harrison, son of Robert of "Crooked Intention." She is the ancestress of the Harrisons of that line. <sup>11</sup>

When John and Edward Hopkins reached their majority, Susannah and their step-father, Thomas Ashcroft, conveyed to them a large part of the lands of their grandfather. A series of transactions took place which make fascinating reading, for they give a glimpse of the land on which some of the earliest plantation houses then stood and which was to be the site of the future town. The cove at the east end of Cherry Street, reaching as far as the Bayside road was an important dividing line separating "Davenport" and the "Beach" on later plats. To John Johning Hopkins they gave land north and west of the cove, 1735. Thirty years later, after the death of his mother, he seemed to have been required to pay £ 100 current money to his step-father for his claim against it by inheritance, "Ashcroft being seizen in fee tail part of four tracts, 119 acres." <sup>12</sup>

This is the "Perry Cabin" farm owned at present by Edward B. Watkins. During the 1700's it was known as "Ashcroft's Old Plantation," since Susannah and her second husband had a mill there for grinding grain with a miller's house on the river shore. It seems probable that they lived on "House Cove" in a house of clapboard which is believed to have been incorporated in the present one by a later owner, Purser S. Hambleton.

To Edward Hopkins, 1735, they gave "for love, good will and affecon part of 'The Beach,' 'Elliott's Lott' and 'Stopper' beginning at a locust stake standing at the north side of a small gutt and on the south side of the old orchard the said stake stand-

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11. Wills, 1666-1713, Easton f. 270

12. Talbot Land Records, L. 19, f. 387





The Plantation Home of Edward Elliott,  
built ca. 1680.



ing at the bottom side of the valley that leads from the old house and running from the afsd locust stake west and by north till it intersects the south west line of 'Elliott's Lott'." <sup>13</sup>

The "small gutt" where the locust stake was set is the street between St. Michaels Bank and the Church, though part of this street was taken from the churchyard and used for a hitching place for the horses of those attending Church services. Residents of St. Michaels, living during the late nineteenth century remembered a tidal stream there. The street has been named Willow Street and on the early plats it was Mill Street, but for many years it was known as "The Thoroughfare" as it was a direct way to the mill on the Point.

The old house, referred to in Susannah Ashcroft's deed of gift <sup>14</sup> to John and Edward Hopkins, is now owned by George Tarr and is his home. There is some evidence, however, that it has been repaired and altered. Built of bricks made in large molds and laid partly in Flemish bond and partly in common bond, its plan is like that in other houses in the new settlement at that time. The facade measures 16 ft. while the gable end is 24 ft., thus making it two rooms deep. It rests upon a foundation 4 ft. high. This provides a basement kitchen where pot hooks still hang in the great fireplace.

Ninety years ago, during the 1860's, Benjamin Blades a skillful carpenter of St. Michaels built the present frame wing for a Captain Thomas who was the owner then. A corner chimney with fireplaces was covered by boards. The chimney is still there with pot hooks for cooking and this shows there was always a dependent wing, which could have been the first early house.

Edward Elliott's plantation dwelling could have been none other than this old brick house, overlooking Shipping Creek and Church Cove where ships from many distant ports lay at anchor. The Church, which he and Darby Coghorn had built, was stand-

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<sup>13</sup>. Land Records, L. 14, f. 137

<sup>14</sup>. Land Records, Talbot County, L. 14, f. 137

ing in a grove of trees, on a knoll, across a small stream and marsh not far away.

During the years immediately preceding the War of the Revolution, St. Michaels had become an active, thriving village. Shipyards were everywhere around it. Many ships were built and sailing craft of every design and class called at landing places, laden with manufactured articles to receive in exchange tobacco, ground grain and lumber. Thomas Harrison of "Crooked Intention" (Canton) was noted as the leading merchant. The wharves or trading places were called exchanges. On an early plat there is "Warrilowe's Exchange," located just south of Parrott's Point on the river shore.

Probably, about the year 1770, a Liverpool firm, Messrs. Kildart and John Gawith & Company, sent to St. Michaels James Braddock to be their agent or factor. He promoted their trade and seemed to have prospered. It was he who first envisioned a town, surveyed and laid out in streets and lots. With that idea in mind he purchased from John (Johning) Hopkins two tracts of land, one in 1777 containing  $21\frac{3}{4}$  acres and the other,  $44\frac{3}{4}$  acres, in 1778. This is the land which had belonged to his grandfather and was given to him and Edward by their mother, Susannah Ashcroft. From the two sales he, John (Johning) Hopkins, realized nearly 500 pounds sterling.<sup>15</sup> In addition to these tracts, Braddock acquired land from Jeremiah Banning which is West Chestnut Street and also land from John Dorgan, laying out East Chestnut and St. Mary's Square.

The survey began with the oldest part of the village and the lots on Mill Street or "The Thoroughfare" were numbered from one to seven. Joseph Harrison, son of Thomas, bought Lot No. 2, facing Church Cove, price being 60 pounds sterling. John Bruff in 1779 bought Lot No. 3 for 60 pounds. Each of these was improved by a house as shown by the consideration.<sup>16</sup> Joseph Harrison and his wife Elizabeth in 1780 bought Lot No. 4 on which was built the historic house once the home of Elizabeth's grandfather, Edw-

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15. Talbot County Land Records, L. 14, f. 137

ard Elliott. They also bought two other lots, "distinguished on the platt as No. 5 and No. 6, containing one acre and running to St. Michael's Parish Church, consideration 180 pounds sterling."

That Elizabeth Ashcroft Harrison should have owned Lot No. 5 is prophetic, since upon it 171 years hence there was to be erected a Parish House dedicated to Christ Church.

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16. L. 21, f. 145

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE HATTONS CLAIM THE LAND ON WHICH THE CHURCH WAS BUILT

Twenty years after Edward Elliott had established himself in the Maryland Province, John Hatton and his wife, Jane, came from St. Mary's, 1680, to settle in Talbot County. They selected for their plantation a tract of land extending along the northeast branch of Broad Creek. Wooded points there were, wide water and quiet coves; they chose a site on an inland sea, as it were, and called their home "Hatton's Garden."<sup>1</sup>

The Hattons were active in the affairs of the Province. Thomas Hatton, John's Uncle, was Lord Baltimore's secretary and he was for a short time Governor of the Maryland Province.

John and Jane Hatton also received a patent for "Bentley Hay." Through the record runs the story of their dealings, and their attitude toward others. By this, though centuries have elapsed, their characters can be correctly judged. Jane, with her kinsman, George Taylor, in 1695, patented "Chance," the Trice farm and the land which now comprises the southwest part of the town. This they named "Taylor's and Jane's Discovery." It is evident that Jane Hatton aspired to be a large land holder. From subsequent conveyances of land, there is a suggestion that she was the widow of John Hollingsworth for, when he conveyed

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1. Talbot Land Patent Book

"The Beach" to William Hambleton, it was "with the consent of my wife, Jane."

Finally she discovered a strip of vacant land between "Bentley Hay" and "Hatton's Garden." Beginning a half mile south of the Church, it seemed to extend as far as "Shipping Creek" (Harbor) overlapping "The Beach." This Jane called "Jane's Progress" and because of it, there arose a bitter controversy "as to whose land the Church was built on."

It was in the early years of 1700, when the first church had been replaced by the second one of clapboard, or hewn timbers, that the misunderstanding began. The first builder was no longer living. Doubtless the boundaries of the original land grants were the subject of discussion, the location and extent of "The Beach," bordering the shore of "Shipping Creek" and Church Cove; "Elliott's Lott," all the land north of the Church, and "Jane's Progress" south of the Church. The Hattons were now claiming the land on which the church was built. How dismayed the children of Edward Elliott must have been when they considered their father's religious turn of mind and his thought for the spiritual welfare of his neighbors!

At length depositions were made and filed in Court. Preserved among the Court Records of Talbot County, they throw light upon the Church in its beginning:

Talbot County, August 3rd, 1736

Then came the gentlemen of the Vestry of St. Michaels Parish and brought these three depositions of Edward Elliott, (Jr.), Susannah Ashcroft and Richard Harrington and prayed the same to be enrolled amongst the records of Talbot County and they are enrolled in these words to wit:

The deposition of Edward Elliott, Jr., concerning the land whereon the Parish Church now stands, "As to the old church I remember was built by my father and one Darby Coghon and that time it was unknown whose land it was built

upon but several years after itt seemed to be in dispute between my father and John Hatton to the best of my remembrance I have heard my father say that if it proved to be on his land he would freely give it and further saith not."

The deposition of Mrs. Susannah Ashcroft concerning the land whereon the Parish Church stands viz't, that her father, Mr. Edward Elliott deceased being asked what he would take for two acres of land for the church use, replied that he would freely give it for the use of the Church.

Richard Harrington testified for John Hatton, whose daughter was the wife of John Harrington, Richard's brother: Richard Harrington said, "one day being att work att the church he asked the said Hatton whether he was come to forewarn him working there the said Hatton said that he had given the land he could give a few trees also and further saith not." <sup>2</sup>

An interesting notation is to be found in the Vestry records a year later:

"At the Parish Church, Oct. 31st, 1737 met Mr. Daniel Sherwood, Mr. Richard Skinner and Mr. Thomas Spry. An order that Mrs. Susannah Ashcroft be paid twenty shillings current money out of the oblation money deposited in the hands of Joseph Hopkins full satisfaction for her attendance nine days on the County Court to give evidence on behalf of the Parish in relation to church land and that the order be made on the said Joseph to pay her."

Eight years after the depositions were recorded, the long dispute was ended. Jane Hatton's daughter Mary, had married David Hughes. Their son, John, inherited one-half of "Jane's Progress" near the Church. On October 2nd, 1744, John Hews (Hughes) and Sarah his wife conveyed to St. Michael's Parish

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2. Land Records, Easton, L. 14, f. 173

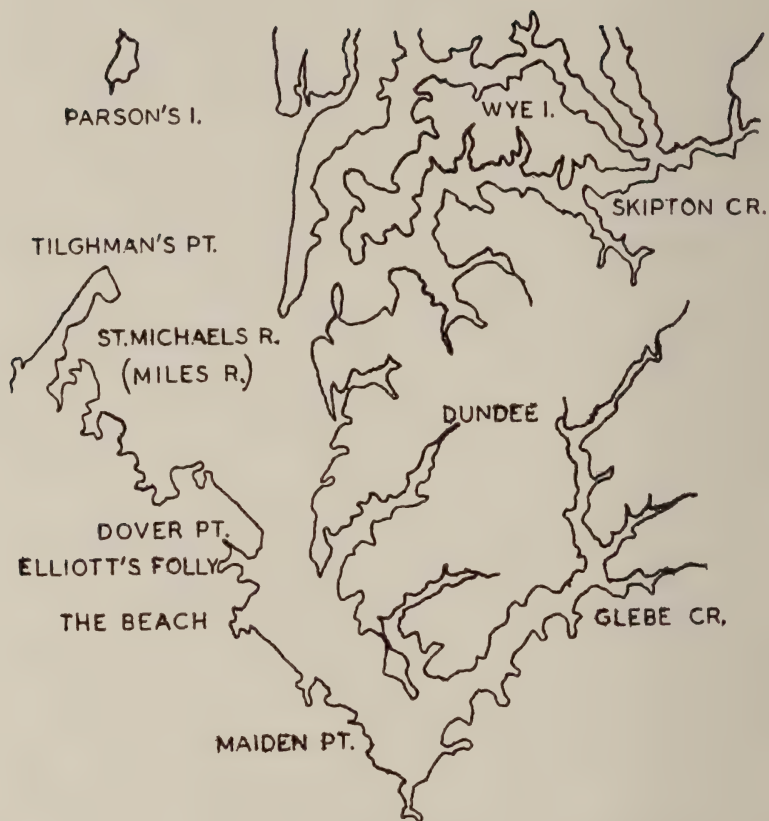


Church "part of a tract called 'Jane's Progress,' the part whereon stands the Parish Church, beginning at a marked cedar with 12 notches thereon standing by the main road and running north 86 degrees east 14 P. then south 4 degrees east 22 P. then south 86 degrees west 14 P. then with a straight line to the beginning."

Most impressive is the vestry record of that generous gift: "Oct. 1744. It is ordered that the Register draw on the sheriff's account of Talbot County for 100 pounds of tobacco payable to John Hews for certain services of him the said John Hews this day done at the request of the Vestry."

The title was now secure through the gracious gift of John Hews (Hughes) now unknown and forgotten. John was at that time the sexton of the church. <sup>3</sup>

The name Hatton does not appear anywhere in the Vestry records. Since the Calverts were Roman Catholics and the Hattons were intimately associated with them, it is quite probable that they were of the same faith. This may have been one of the causes of the dissention concerning the land.



Map of St. Michael's Parish

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CHURCH UNDER THE SWAY OF THE ROYAL GOVERNORS

Through the 1700's, in the Vestry records there is found many times the phrase, "An order be drawn on the Sheriff." In 1689 when William III was crowned King of England, Maryland became a Royal Province. The Barons of Baltimore were no longer Absolute Lords, but were reduced to Lords of the soil. Lionel Copley was appointed the first Royal Governor. At his first Assembly an Act was passed for the establishment of the Church of England.<sup>1</sup>

On June 20 1693, so runs the Court record, "the Court proceeds to lay out the parishes for the County and appoint the vestrymen." The three parishes of Talbot County were St. Paul's, St. Peter's and St. Michael's.

Cecilius, the second Lord Baltimore and founder, died in 1675. Contrary to his desire and plan that religious toleration be practised in his Maryland Palatinate, all Church business from 1693 to the time of the Revolution was conducted by the Court and money paid by the Sheriff. A typical entry in the minutes of a Vestry meeting is, "Sept. 17th, 1736. Vestry met. Ordered that the Register draw off the Sheriff's account and go to Court and settle with him. Resolved that an order be drawn on the Sheriff in favor of Joseph Harrison for seventy pounds of tobacco for mending the Bible and Prayer Book."

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1. Court Records

The Church in St. Michael's Parish, during its first twenty-five years, was in the care of two ministers, the Rev. James Clayland and the Rev. Richard Marsden. In 1708 the Rev. Henry Nicols of Jesus College, Oxford, was sent from England to accept the duties of Rector. As was then the custom, under the jurisdiction of Royal Governors, he purchased his plantation home and lived there. This was "Maiden Point" which was conveyed to him by Edmund, Ann and Perry Benson in 1712. The low story and half wing of the house, now the home of General and Mrs. Arms, was his home and the Rectory. He died Feb. 12th, 1748 and was buried, as he directed in his will, "in my Parish Church near my late wife, Elizabeth." <sup>2</sup> His tomb is in the basement of the present edifice and his lineal descendants, Mr. Nicols Hardcastle, Senior Warden, and Miss Sarah H. Hardcastle are communicants of Christ Church.

The Rev. John Gordon was then called and assumed the rectorship Mar. 12th, 1748. His name disappears from the record after Aug. 1st, 1784, having been Rector 36 years. According to the records of St. Michael's Parish, the Rev. Mr. Gordon died in 1789. A fire partially destroyed his home at St. Michaels River Ferry and it is believed valuable Church records were lost. His widow, Mary Gordon (nee Tilghman) claimed a dower right in the glebe lands under the will of Thomas Smithson. It was this provision in his will that caused much misunderstanding with rectors in later years.

Although there is no record of the date of the construction of the second church, it was in use more than a hundred years, from the early 1700's to 1814. That it was a frame structure is evident for there was an order for tarring the weatherboard and also for shingling the north end. Joseph and Thomas Harrison agreed "to underpin the Parish Church with good hard brick." This record also mentioned the gallery in the new addition.

The following minute lists the subscribers:

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2. Wills L.D.D. No. 4, 1746-1748, Annapolis

“At a special meeting of the Vestry, 1762 the several subscribers for the new addition to the Parish Church met at the said Church and drew Lotts for the Pews in the said addition and those that had pews removed also had others assigned to them in their stead:

Viz’t

- 1 Mr. Feddeman Rolle
- 2 Allice Grace
- 3 Mr. Feddeman Rolle
- 4 Mr. Francis Marting
- 5 Rev. John Gorden
- 6 John Ross
- 7 Jacob Hindman
- 8 Christopher Spry
- 9 James Benson (by him sold to Elizabeth Aldern)
- 10 James Denny
- 11 Mrs. Elizabeth Aldern
- 12 Daniel Sherwood
- 13 Capt. Will Webb Haddaway
- 14 James Lowe
- 15 Thomas Harrison
- 16 Daniel Bridges
- 17 Edward Haddaway
- 18 Mr. Peter Hunt
- 19 Joseph Porter
- 20 Mr. Foster Maynard-

In the Galary

- 1 Mr. John Hopkins
- 2 Mrs. Mary Haddaway
- 3 Mr. James Wrightson, Jun.
- 4 James Calk
- 5 Mr. Joseph Denny
- 6 Mr. James Hews
- 7 Joseph Denny
- 8 Peter Hunt, the younger”

While the Established Church was under the jurisdiction of

the Crown, its religious interest and usefulness declined and there was little incentive for churchmen to give freely of their wealth and services. Therefore charges were made on the Sheriff's account and payment required for performing the smallest tasks, such as cleaning the plate and washing the linen.

Charles, the fifth Baron, succeeded his father, Benedict Leonard Calvert in 1715. As his father had done, he renounced the Roman Catholic faith and attached himself to the Church of England. The Assembly of 1716 then passed stringent laws concerning oath of allegiance to the King, abhorency against the Pope and abjuration of the claims of the Pretender. After 1717 drastic legislation was enacted against Roman Catholics though the laws were never carried out to the letter.

In order that Joseph Hopkins might qualify as a Vestryman, May 3rd, 1747, so the record states, "Rev. Henry Nicols administered the oath of allegiance, abhorency and abjuration as they are appointed to be taken by an Act of Assembly of this Province and also the oath of Vestrymen to Joseph Hopkins which same Joseph Hopkins doth make the declaration called the Test."

Whether political expediency or a sincere change of faith motivated the fifth Lord Baltimore, can not now be determined. At any rate King George I, May, 1715, restored palatinate authority to him under the terms of the original charter.

Vestry records refer repeatedly to the appointment of tobacco inspectors. An Act, concerning religion was passed in 1702 which contained a very unpopular feature, the tax of forty pounds of tobacco per poll upon all taxables for the support of the clergy. Those who objected most earnestly sought to avoid the tax by filling the hogsheads with weeds. Vestries were given power to appoint inspectors and the right to collect the tobacco.

It is noted that inspectors for the year 1755, were John Calk, Edward Trippe, Thomas Harrison, Daniel Feddeman from Broad Creek and James Benson, John Young, Thomas Barron and Thomas Ray on "Miles" River.



During the eighteenth century, the pages of Church history are replete with the names of the faithful. Some of them were eminent men and some of their names are familiar ones at the present time: Thomas Sherwood of "Sherwood Forest;" Joseph Harrington, "Hatton's Garden;" Thomas Harrison, "Crooked Intention;" James Lowe and William Haddaway, Bayside; Daniel Bridges, Broad Creek; Matthew Tilghman, "Rich Neck," President of the Provincial Assembly; Joseph Hopkins, Tred Avon; John Rolle, "Rolle's Range;" Col. Jeremiah Banning; Honorable Robert Goldsborough, "Myrtle Grove," member of the continental Congress.

They came long distance on foot, on horse back or in boats to worship here on St. Michaels river. The ancient Church of hewn timbers, silvered with age, stood serene in a grove of stately trees. By its door and through the church yard passed the trail that led to Bayside.



Site of the Chapel of Ease, Dundee.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CHAPELS OF EASE

Situated in remote sections of the Parish there were Chapels of Ease for the convenience of parishoners living far from the Mother Church. Some of them were in use only a few years while others were kept longer and became well known throughout the County during the 1700's. Planters living on Wye, on the upper reaches of St. Michaels river, or on the tributaries of the Chop-tank often traveled by water, but there was always the question of religious instruction for indentured servants and slaves in whom masters were usually interested.

The Vestry minutes, 1765, mention "a house rented on Pickering Creek from Robert Pickering for divine worship." By far the most important Chapel of Ease was the one called "Dundee," located on St. Michaels river on the plantation now known as "Little Dundee." Frequent references to it are found in the minutes in regard to repairs, and services. As early as Aug. 15th, 1733 there is the following entry which indicates it had been in use, then, many years: "The Vestry agreed with William Edwards, Church Warden, to endeavor to procure glass for mending ye windows of ye Chappell at Dundee and to make such repairs of said Chappell as shall be found necessary."

Again it is recorded: "Ordered that an order be drawn on John Bozman, Esq., for two pounds, two shillings payable to Mrs. Elizabeth Kinimont for wine at Dundee." "1741, Mr. Richard Bruff brought in an account of sundry services done at Dundee."

The following notation from the minutes reveals how little was paid for the services of the sexton: "Order be drawn on Mr. John Bracco in favor of Alice Kinimont for 26 pounds of tobacco at 6 shillings 6 pence per 100 for five month's salary for taking care of the chapel at Dundee, 8th Sept. 1774."

This historic Chapel was located near the Lloyd plantations, and a few miles distant from Bruff's Island, the home of the Bruffs. The lands of the Goldsboroughs, "Ashby" and "Myrtle Grove" lay across St. Michaels river, narrow here near its source. The hallowed site can now be found only by bricks and rubble in the soil and by the name of a cove on one side which is called "Church Cove." Every vestige of the building, the paling fence and the grove of trees have disappeared. A County road, leading past it toward Longwoods, has been cut deep into the soil exposing brick foundations.

In 1781, according to the Parish Record, "Dundee" was found to be in a ruinous state. The sacred vessels were brought to the Rev. John Gordon's house and subscriptions taken for a Chapel of Ease at Miles River Ferry. The plantation "Dundee" was first patented to John Kinnymont (Kinnemont) by a warrant dated 4th of August, 1659, consisting of 400 A. It was owned by the Kinnamons about a hundred years, when in 1765 it was conveyed to Edward Lloyd.

From the Parish records, kept in the Talbot County Library, it appears that fifty-seven years elapsed before a church was built to replace the Chapel at Dundee. Dr. Joseph Spencer made the following Parochial Report May 29, 1839:

"The site for the Miles River Ferry Church was presented by Charles Lowndes. \$600 has been raised toward it by subscription, \$800 by the ladies. The Church at Miles River Ferry, begun in 1835, was finished in December last (1838), consecrated by Bishop Doane in Apr. 1839." <sup>1</sup>

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1. Parochial Report of Dr. Spencer

On the Tuckahoe river at the bridge, there was St. John's Chapel of Ease. A few loose pages concerning it are in St. Michael's Parish records, though it was, no doubt, in St. Peter's Parish, the line between the two parishes being undetermined. Among those who attended divine service there in the late eighteenth century were John Fisher, Richard Mason, David Robinson, Thomas Hughlett, Jacob Winchester and Thomas Goldsborough, several of whom lived across the Tuckahoe river in Caroline County. Caroline was formed of parts of Queen Anne's and Dorchester in 1773. This chapel is probably the beginning of St. John's Episcopal Church at Hillsborough.

Holy Innocents Chapel at Claiborne was the outgrowth of a church school established by Mrs. Joseph P. Tunis (nee Helen Kemp) on Claiborne Hall farm for children living far from Christ Church, St. Michaels. The school was at first held in an outbuilding on the place. Later Mr. Tunis built a chapel and afterwards this was moved to the village. The Rev. Erastus F. Dashiell established the Chapel of Ease, named in memory of the children who attended the church school. With the coming of the automobile and better means of travel, services were discontinued during the ministry of the Rev. Henry V. Saunders in 1926.

The Altar, the Altar Cross in memory of Joseph P. Tunis, the window, a memorial of John Kemp and the communion silver, chalice and paten, inscribed to the memory of Dr. Dashiell, were placed in Christ Church. This hallowed building was sold to the Methodist Church of Claiborne and they used it as a Parish House. It was burned in 1944.

On Ferry Neck road in the vicinity of Royal Oak, there was a Chapel of Ease used in the late 1800's and during the first years of 1900. It was built and established by Mrs. E. L. F. Hardcastle in memory of her two little boys who met a tragic death. Her granddaughter and namesake, Miss Sarah Hughlett Hardcastle has written the following paragraph:

"In 1856 Capt. E. L. F. Hardcastle completed his new house,



built on Plain Dealing Farm, which farm he had purchased from a Mr. Lockerman. Between the birth in June of 1856 of his eldest son Richard Lockwood Hardcastle and the birth in November 1865 of his last son Hughlett Hardcastle, there were four other little boys. Two died very suddenly and tragically. In memory of those babies, the mother had a small Chapel built on the far corner of the farm. The Rectors from St. Michaels Christ Church held occasional services in this Chapel. It continued in use until possibly 1910. In the days of poor roads; it was a great convenience for people and their little children to be able to attend Church Services."

Maria Martin who was a very faithful and able worker in St. Paul's Chapel, is still (1955) in church work as a Deaconess.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

#### IN THE UNITED STATES

After the War of the Revolution the condition of the Anglican Church in America was deplorable. Rectors had been recalled to England and a complete re-organization was necessary. Conventions were called in Philadelphia, Annapolis and Baltimore to which St. Michael's Parish sent men, as delegates, who were well known in State and National affairs. Robert H. Goldsborough, later United States Senator (Hanson's Old Kent), attended conventions in Baltimore and Annapolis. Coincident with the founding of a new Republic, United States of America, was the re-establishment of the Anglican Church and in a convention, called at Chestertown, 1781, a name was adopted, the Protestant Episcopal Church. It was notable that this convention was composed entirely of clergy and laymen of the Eastern Shore.<sup>1</sup>

The Vestry at this time found it necessary to dispose of some of the Church land. Accordingly Samuel Tennant and others of the Vestry, 1802, "conveyed to William Sears one lot of land, consideration \$295, part of a tract conveyed to the Church by John Hewes." Upon this land now stand the houses of the late Dr. S. D. Willson and Mrs. J. H. Wales.<sup>2</sup> To John Merchant, May 5th,

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1. The Rev. William Wyllie, History of the Diocese of Easton,  
Star-Democrat, Jan. 1944

2. Land Records, L. 29, f, 500

1800, they sold for \$78.12 part of that tract conveyed to them by John Hughes 175 ft. long and 22 ft. wide. To Samuel Harrison they sold a strip 190 ft. long and 26 ft. wide consideration \$97.<sup>3</sup> These two long narrow strips of land are across Talbot Street from the Church and the sales are significant for they show plainly that the main street of the town was cut through Church land.

The Vestry met on Champ's Creek and agreed to take \$800 for a part of that area. It is written in the Church minutes, "The Vestry executed a deed to Edward Lloyd for a tract of land called 'Forked Neck,' Maj. Sherwood to receive the money."<sup>4</sup> All of the above transactions indicate clearly the need of funds in the first years of the newly re-organized Church in America.

Upon the death of the Rev. John Gordon, the Vestry called the Rev. John Bowie, known as a Loyalist or Tory. He was born near Marlboro, Prince George's County and was educated in Scotland for the ministry and before returning to America married there Miss Margaret Dallas. His call to St. Michael's Parish was both fortunate and advantageous for him since the Parish had large holdings in glebe lands which had been bequeathed to it by Col. Thomas Smithson. Dr. Bowie's family, consisting of thirty-two persons, his wife, five children and twenty-five slaves, could well use the profits and benefices arising from the Glebe.

However, Dr. Bowie could not occupy the Glebe plantation because Mrs. Mary Gordon, widow of the late Rector, claimed dower rights in it according to the terms of Thomas Smithson's will. He then rented "Fausley," the home of Col. Tench Tilghman's mother which was adjacent to the Glebe. He conducted there a private school for young men, many of whom afterwards became prominent in state and national affairs. Among them were John Leeds Kerr, United States Senator; Edward Lloyd and Samuel Stevens, Governors of Maryland.

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3. Land Records, L. 38, f. 229

4. Skirven, *The First Parishes of Maryland*

Dr. Bowie lived at "Fausley" until his death Sept. 3rd, 1801, having been Rector of St. Michael's Parish eleven years.<sup>5</sup>

Contrary to the intention of the Act of 1702, that Rectors preside at Vestry meetings, Dr. Bowie's name seldom appears in the minutes during his incumbency. The Act provides "Always that in every Parish where any minister or incumbent is or shall be Lawfully to the Laws and usages of the Province appointed; and in possession of any Liveing invested in the 40 p. poll (tax) and resideing therein he shall during the continuance afors'd, and noe longer be one of the Vestry of such Parish and Principall of such Vestry."<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Bowie, like other clergymen in the Province during the Revolution was a Royalist and he refused to subscribe to the oath of Allegiance to Maryland maintaining that it was inconsistent with his ordination vows. For his uncompromising position he merits profound respect, even though he was a Tory.

The separation of the Province from England left the Established Church without organization. In the Assembly of 1779 An Act was passed which was the first step toward its re-organization and continuance:

"Be it remembered that agreeable to the Directors of an Act of Assembly made at a session of Assembly held at the City of Annapolis on Tuesday ninth of March, 1779 entitled An Act for the establishment of select Vestries, sundry of the inhabitants of St. Michael's Parish x x x x x x x met June 7th, 1779 and elected the Vestry of select men: Viz. Mr. Matthew Tilghman, Mr. Wm. Hindman, Mr. John Bracco, Mr. Jeremiah Banning, Mr. Robert Goldsborough, Jr., Mr. Peregrine Tilghman and Mr. William Dawson and also the following persons for Church Wardens, Mr. Thomas Ray and Mr. Roger Horace Pratt.

The Act required the Oath of Fidelity: "I -----

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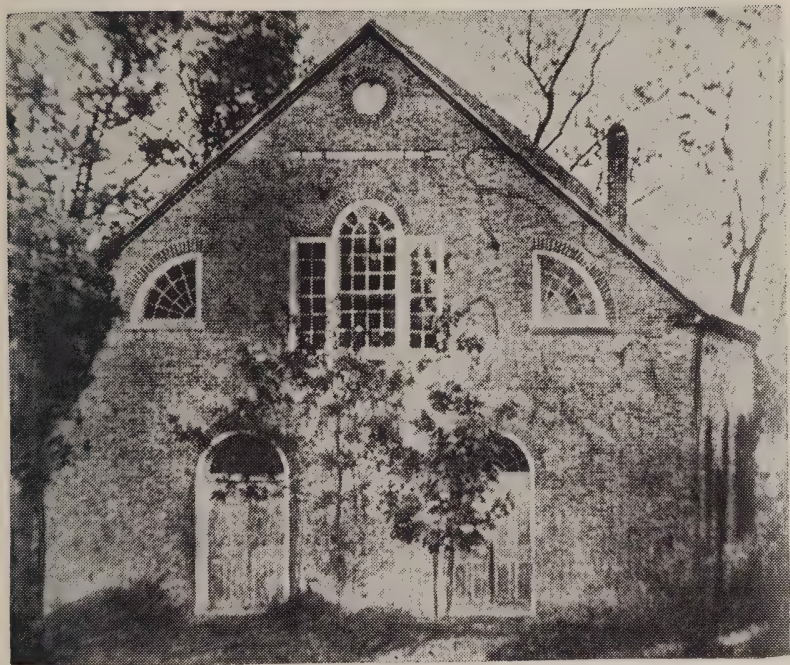
5. Lucy Leigh Bowie, Md. Hist. Magazine, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2

6. Skirven, First Parishes in the Province of Maryland

do swear that I do not hold myself bound to yield my allegiance or obedience to the King of Great Britain his heirs or successors. And that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the State of Maryland." On the faded pages of the second Vestry register are the signatures of the Vestrymen and other responsible Churchmen who dared to subscribe to the oath. Written in bold, legible hand, their names evidence courage and deep religious conviction for no one knew then (1779) the outcome of the War. The treaty of peace was signed four years later at Paris, Sept. 3, 1783.

After the death of Dr. Bowie in 1801 the Vestry met Easter Monday, April 19th, 1802 and called the Rev. John Price, "and engaged to give him all the prefects arising from the Glebe lands for his services as Rector." He resigned in 1808, after some disagreement with the Vestry, refusing to pass to them a bond "which would preclude his widow, should he leave a widow, from claiming dower in any part of the glebe lands under the will of Thomas Smithson."





The Third Church, 1814 - 1878.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE THIRD CHURCH

The Vestry met Aug. 6th, 1810 and elected Nathan Harrington and Perry Spencer to examine the condition of the Church. In September they reported it in a ruinous state and "agreed to pull down the old structure." Then plans were made immediately for building a new and third Church. One can well imagine the old clapboard building becoming worn and delapidated since it had stood through the hard pre-Revolutionary years. The new one was to be built of brick and was constructed under the supervision of Perry Spencer of Spencer Hall and his neighbor, Samuel Tennant. Rectangular and plain in design, with steep sloping roof, it suited well its location in the center of the fast growing town. But it was not soundly constructed and was destined to last only sixty-four years.

After the completion of the third Church in 1814, Robert Goldsborough was requested to address a letter to the Bishop "that the Church is now in a state of forwardness as to receive proposals for a minister. In 1815 the Rev. John Foreman was received as Rector. Then followed the Rev. Reuben Hubbard (1819-1822), the Rev. Mr. Shroeder, 1823, and the Rev. Mr. Hotchkiss, 1823-1827.

The years immediately following the War for Independence were the darkest years of the Protestant Church in America and it is not to be marvelled at that there were intervals of time when the Church had no Rector, since at the time of the Convention,

1780, there were numerous Parishes in Maryland and only six clergymen.

But the Church now began to see the dawn of a new day. The Vestry in May, 1829, resolved to call Dr. Joseph Spencer. He accepted the call and attended his first Vestry meeting May 10th, 1830.

Who, upon entering Christ Church, is not deeply impressed and inspired by the window in the Sanctuary above the Altar dedicated to the memory of the Rev. Dr. Joseph Spencer. He was Rector thirty years. The son of Richard Spencer and Elinor (Hopkins) Spencer, he was born at "Beverly" where he grew to manhood with a large family of brothers and sisters. His ancestors came from Kent County and settled at "Spencer Hall" where his father's brother, Col. Perry Spencer, lived.

While he was Rector of St. Michael's Parish, he lived at Solitude, known recently as the home of the Hammonds. He was given all the benefits arising from tilling the soil and he was permitted to conduct there a private school for boys. This farm has a long and interesting history. First patented to James Benson who owned adjacent land, it passed to the Dodsons, Elliotts, Shanahans and then to Richard Spencer, father of Dr. Joseph Spencer. He conveyed it to the Vestry, 1825, in payment of a bond of \$4500 which he owed the Vestry.

To describe Dr. Spencer best, one may quote a paragraph written by Miss Julia Harrington years ago describing Christmas morning worship in the late 1840's: "The old church at St. Michaels, every pillar and arch, cedar and holly wreathed, in the square box-like pews a congregation of fathers and mothers with their children. In the pulpit the aged Dr. Spencer, his fine face standing out between the tall green-twined candleabra. He reads the hymn. No organ resounds but he reverently raises the hymn. A lady's sweet voice takes it up and the congregation joins in until the anthem becomes a volume of praise rolling along the wide galleries where the servants sit and may join in if they wish."

It is well to pause here to pay tribute to a faithful registrar whose name appears after the minutes many times: "Dan Fedde-man, register." Writing is a clear, legible hand, in concise English and perfect spelling, he kept the Vestry records thirty-two years, from 1800 to 1832.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE GLEBE

Among the men who first landed on Maryland soil, from Lord Baltimore's ships, none was more important than the surveyor. On him adventurers and settlers depended to lay out their tracts of land. Tramping through swamps and threading his way among great forest trees, with his crude instruments, he had to be a venturesome, courageous man. One of those surveyors Thomas Smithson, who explored the river shores of Talbot and Dorchester Counties, is remembered for his generous gift of land to St. Michael's Parish on Glebe Creek .

Although he reassigned to planters many of his warrants for land, which he acquired by survey, the record shows he kept for himself large areas both in Talbot and Dorchester Counties. Evidently the venture proved to be profitable, for as deputy surveyor in the service of Cecilius Calvert he became one of the very wealthy men in the Province during the early 1700's. Thomas Smithson's will, executed in 1713, is unusual and full of interest, in that it cites his possessions and reveals what wealth consisted of them: land and negroes (regardant to the land) buildings and improvements, besides a large quantity of silver plate and coins called Dollars. Dollars in 1713!

Thus run the lines of his will:

"My will is that my just debts be paid which I hope my own book will acknowledge the public is in my debt, the public free school is my greatest creditor but in cash and in Naval Officers hands there is enough I think to discharge all."

"My land at Chester, called 'Reviving Springs,' I give to my Kinswoman, Mary, the wife of John Wrightson and my land



called 'Surveyor's Forest' in Dorchester County I give to my sister Dorothy the wife of Michael Fletcher of Richmond in Yorkshire, Great Britain . . . to her or her husband as soon as she arrives within the Capes of the Chesapeake Bay."

Following the bequest of "Surveyor's Forest" in Dorchester County to his sister Dorothy there is the following provision:

"Provided always that if the Proctor and visitors of free schools discharge me or my executrix of five hundred Dollars part of this money I have in my hands in specie or bills of Exchange to be discounted."

How far Smithson had traveled or to what extent he had traded with the bold men who sailed the Spanish Main can not be learned from the records, but the fact that his treasure consisted partly of Dollars indicated he was actively engaged in foreign trade.

Perhaps the Dollars, mentioned several times in his will, were pieces of eight, minted in Spain. They were used by Spanish sailors who carried them in their pockets all over the world. That he had so much money in "Naval Officers hands" suggests privateering as privately-owned ships at that time were given letters of marque and allowed to prey upon cargo ships of belligerent nations.

The annals of Talbot County contain scant information concerning Thomas Smithson. Looking back two and one-half centuries into the dim past, there emerges the figure of a man with deep religious conviction, with love and charity for others and with here and there a suggestion of a life fraught with romantic and colorful experiences.

The will, filed with the Register of Wills of Talbot County Vol. E. M. 1.f.294, cites in its very beginning his noblest deed, his gift of land and silver to St. Michaels Parish:

"Item. My lands I devise as follows, viz. my dwelling Plantation and adjacent Lands that is 'Holden,' part of 'Holden's Addition,' 'Bright,' 'Holden's Range' and part of 'Mill Road' to Mary

my wife for her life and after her death to remain to the Vestry of the Parish where I live with all the Buildings and Improvements thereon to be for a Glebe for the Church and a dwelling place for the Proctor Rector or Minister of the Parish and his possession forever."

Never, perhaps, had any early settler in the Province of Maryland owned more silver plate than did Thomas Smithson and in his bequest of silver he also remembered the Parish:

"Item. My personal estate I thus bequeath, Viz. to my wife I give two silver porringers and twelve silver spoons, one silver salt and cup forever. The rest of my plate, viz. one silver tankard marked G R (Geo. king) three pieces of fine plate one of which is commonly intended for mustard one other for pepper and one other for sugar commonly called a sugar pot. My will is that she shall have the use of these for her life and after her death the said tankard and three pieces of plate be converted to useful plate for the Communion Table of the Parish Church."

Finally, as an after-thought and as though there were other benefits which would accrue to the good of his beloved Church and insure its permanent existence, he added this last provision:

"This condition I do annex to my devise of my land to the Church viz. that whensoever any Clerk (Rector) dies seized of this devised land in right of his Church leaves a widow she shall have her thirds of all the negroes and land as if it and they were her Husband's inheritance whilst she remains a widow but the widow of a second Clerk or Rector shall not be endorser while the first widow lives."

This last provision caused much misunderstanding between Rectors and the Vestry in subsequent years. When the Rev. John Bowie was called to succeed the Rev. John Gordon who died in 1789, his widow, Mary Gordon, refused to give up the Glebe because of her dower rights.

Situated on the south side of Glebe Creek and on the early road leading from Bayside to Talbot Court House the Glebe farms were almost in the center of the Parish. During the first years of

1800, its management became increasingly difficult and Vestry records abound in references to tennants selling wood unauthorized, failing to pay rent and other irregularities. Perhaps influenced by the idea of receiving a regular annual income of five hundred dollars for the next fifteen years the Vestry decided sell.

The following indenture in the Land Records of Talbot County states that on October 28, 1825 six wardens of St. Michael's Parish sold the Glebe lands to Richard Spencer, consideration \$9000. Thus passed from the ownership of St. Michael's Parish the Glebe lands which had supplied security and financial assistance during 112 years.<sup>1</sup>

In defense of the six wardens who made this decision it is fair to note that their predecessors as Vestrymen, no doubt, had been neglectful of their duty in keeping the Glebe buildings in repair. A letter written by the Rev. Reuben Hubbard, 1822, complained bitterly of the house in which he lived. He said the rain poured through the roof and wind blew, whistled through the cracks in the walls.

Richard Spencer conveyed to the Vestry at this time, 1825, Solitude. A rectory was built there in which his son, the Rev. Joseph Spencer, D. D. lived while he was Rector of St. Michael's Parish.

Solitude was sold to Ormond Hammond in 1848. Dr. Spencer bought the property where Miss Annie Williams lives and probably lived there until the present Rectory was bought. In his declining years he was assisted by the Rev. Meyer Lewin.

The Rectory was conveyed to the Vestry, Dec. 5th, 1857. The deed of transfer is interesting because the names of those to whom it was assigned are listed: "Daniel Hope, Jr., and Lydia his wife do grant unto John Harrington, Charles Lowndes, William Goldsborough, Robert Banning, Jonathan Harrison, Thomas Tennant, William Harrison, and George Goldsborough two lots or parcels of land on West Chestnut St., consideration \$2000."<sup>2</sup>

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1. L. 46, f. 211

2. Talbot Land Records, L 67, f. 543



Interior of Christ Church, showing the Sanctuary window,  
a memorial to The Rev. Joseph Spencer, D. D.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE FOURTH CHURCH

The Rev. Erastus F. Dashiell, D. D. came to St. Michael's Parish in 1867. He was appointed, 1868, to collect funds for the Episcopal Endowment Fund of the Diocese of Easton. During his ministry and under his direction the present imposing edifice was built, 1878, the Fourth Church upon the same site. Built of massive stone, Gothic in design, with high vaulted ceiling, perfect symmetry, it symbolizes the courage, faith and charity of Edward Elliott who selected this site and built the first Church.

The Diocesan Convention of 1881 resolved to divide the large area comprising St. Michael's Parish into three smaller parishes, St. Michael's, Miles River and All Saints. In the beginning, when the Court laid out the parishes of Talbot County, June 20th, 1693, it extended over the western part of the County, bounded by the waters of the St. Michael's, Wye and Choptank Rivers. The County was then a vast wilderness with its population centered on plantations along the water-ways.<sup>1</sup> Two hundred years later the scene had changed as the land was cleared and settled.

Percy G. Skirven in his valuable book, "The First Parishes of the Province of Maryland," quotes the following record:

"St. Michael's Parish (1693) consists of Mill and Bay Hundred and part of Island Hundred that is to say from the Court House downward." The Court House then was on Skipton Creek.

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1. Arch. Vol. 23, p 21 and 22

“The Parish is bounded on the east by a road leading from Wye Mills to Talbot Town and by the Tred Avon River, on the south by the Choptank River. Both the Chesapeake and Eastern Bays bound it on the West. The Wye river and Skipton creek, formerly known as Brewer’s Branch, are its northern bounds.”

In the new division of 1881, Miles River Parish bounds were the following:

Beginning at a point near “Perry Hall” farm residence, then running east to Col. Bartlett’s estate on Tred Avon River, then with this river to Lee Haven, thence to the mouth of Glebe Creek, thence up Miles River to Wye River, the Eastern Bay to the beginning.

Bounds of St. Michael’s Parish: Beginning at Benoni Point at the mouth of Tread Avon River, thence with said river to the point where its banks are intersected by the line of Miles River Parish, thence to the banks of St. Michaels River at a point just west of Perry Hall residence, thence with St. Michaels River to Tilghman Point, and thence with the shore line of Talbot County to the beginning.

The Goldsboroughs of “Myrtle Grove” in 1870 donated the glebe, “Old Mill Farm” and a church was built close to the highway leading from Longwoods to Easton. The church is All Saints and the country in that part of Talbot County became All Saints Parish. It included the large inland area between the St. Michaels, Wye, Tuckahoe and Choptank Rivers. Beginning at the mouth of Glebe Creek, it embraced the land east of upper St. Michaels River and the King’s Creek district, bounded on the south by King’s Creek and Wootenau Branch.

The Rev. Dr. Dashiell was retained as Rector of Christ Church, the Mother Church of the original St. Michael’s Parish. He lived in the rectory until his death in 1886. A plaque in Christ Church on the wall near the pulpit honors his memory.



## CHAPTER NINE

### LAYING THE CORNERSTONE OF THE FOURTH CHURCH

#### AND THE

### DEDICATION OF THE PARISH HOUSE

Among some miscellaneous Church papers in the Rectory, there was found an account of laying the corner stone of Christ Church. Written by Miss Helen Goodsell, one of the two sisters who later donated their home for a Parish House, it describes vividly and in detail that important event:

“Laying the cornerstone of our new Church edifice, which event occurred on the 14th of August in the year 1878 at 5 P. M.

Our little congregation were seated on benches placed under the trees on the south side of the new Church site, nearest the south west corner where the corner stone was to be placed, the choir and small organ in front. There was a goodly number of citizens present besides our own congregation, the ladies all being seated, the gentlemen with uncovered heads, standing in the shade of the trees. At five o'clock the bell was rung when four clergymen in their surplices walked past where we were seated and up onto the platform near the stone, Dr. Dashiell leading and Bishop Lay coming last. A hymn was sung by the choir. The Rector, Dr. E. F. Dashiell, then gave out a hymn the 202nd of the hymnal, ‘The Church’s one Foundation’ which was sung all standing. The 102nd Psalm was then read and responses made, after

this a short prayer by the Bishop. The Rector then read a list of the articles to be placed in the stone, also reading a record prepared by Dr. Samuel Harrison of Easton of the names and dates of ministry of the twelve incumbents of Christ Church since its foundation including a period of two hundred years commencing with the Reverend James Clayland in the year 1672. Next the master mason came forward and put the stone in its place, testing it with square, level and plumb and then retiring. Bishop Lay stepped to the side of the stone and with a mason's hammer, he struck the stone three times and with the words, 'I lay this corner stone in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen,' striking the stone at each name of the Trinity.

This part of the ceremony ended, the Clergy came down under the trees while the Choir sang the 275th hymn, 'This Stone to Thee in Faith we Lay.' The Bishop's chair was placed under the beautiful linden tree and from there he preached an elequent sermon, his text being, 'The Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.' The benediction closed the interesting service." <sup>1</sup>

List of articles placed within the stone:

Copy of the Holy Bible. Prayer Book and Hymnal

Photograph of the old church of 1812

Copy of a sermon by Bishop Lay, L. L. D.

Journals of three Conventions

Copy of Churchman and Church Almanac

A copy each of the Baltimore American Sun and Gazette

A copy of Easton Ledger, Gazette and Star

A copy of St. Michaels Comet

Names of present Rector, Wardens and Vestrymen

Names of finance and building Committee

Names of architect and builder

Also a sketch (read by the Rector) of names of all

Rectors from the foundation of the Church

Mrs. Cornelia R. Smith and her sister, Miss Helen Goodsell,

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1. Helen Goodsell's Notes

bequeathed to Christ Church, 1916, their home to be used as a Parish House. As it was not suitable for that purpose it was sold and the money was used toward building another one in a more convenient location and more modern in design.

The new Parish House was formally opened and dedicated, June 21st, 1951, by the Bishop of the Diocese of Easton, the Rt. Rev. Allen J. Miller, Ph. D., assisted by two former Rectors, the Rev. Robert W. Lewis and the Rev. Christoph Keller and the present Rector, the Rev. Paul F. Williams under whose supervision it was built.

Since the death of the Rev. Dr. E. F. Dashiell, 1886, twelve clergymen have been ministers of Christ Church. Among them were men of outstanding ability and blessed with a sincere sense of devotion to their work: the Rev. Henry V. Saunders, who, with the assistance of his wife, improved the Rectory; the Rev. R. W. Lewis and the Rev. Christoph Keller, who were loved and esteemed by the entire community; and the present Rector, the Rev. Paul F. Williams, who in a scholarly and impressive manner brings to his people each Sunday a message of reassurance and spiritual guidance.

In a sheltered cove, along a wide, beautiful river, on a little knoll stands Christ Protestant Episcopal Church, a sacred memorial to those first early settlers who established a church on "The Beach" where their descendants, and others, of successive generations have worshipped through the years.



## CHAPTER TEN

### MAIDEN POINT

The tract of land, extending from the Heikes farm to Spencer's Creek, is known as "Maiden Point," though in its earliest years, other names were associated with it. To those persons who are familiar with the area at present it is a surprise to learn that in its beginning it was surveyed and laid out in long, narrow strips parallel to the river shore.

Prominent among the early explorers along St. Michaels river were John and Charles Hollingsworth. While John was exploring in "Shipping Creek," afterwards to become St. Michaels harbor, Charles slipped farther up the river and selected a beautiful point and shore between two creeks. Here he had surveyed, Aug. 3rd, 1664, a long, rectangular tract reaching from the mouth of the creek to the Barnett land, containing  $113\frac{3}{4}$  acres. He named his land "Maiden Point," though often in early documents, it was referred to as "Little Neck."

Three years later, 1667, John Reynolds with the south shore of the Creek, (later Spencer's Creek) as his beginning, patented a piece of land bordering on Charles Hollingsworth's "Maiden Point." The patent states "at the uppermost bounded tree." This Reynolds called "Fox Harbour," a name in all likelihood derived from his own.

Another adventurer is identified with this region. He was Humphrey Davenport. He styled himself a "Docktor of Phisick" but he is known to have traded extensively in land and tobacco since he had a warrant for "Davenport," the "Perry Cabin Farm"

and had sold it to Edward Elliott for 40,000 pounds of tobacco. In 1675 Humphrey Davenport patented "Maiden Point Addition," 100 A. next to "Fox Harbour." (Talbot County Land Patent Books, Annapolis.)

During the years 1658 and 1659, a surveyor, Thomas Smithson, surveyed a large area of land in this County and obtained a warrant for 3500 acres. These he sold in parcels to prospective planters. In 1689, he assigned to Dr. (Capt.) James Benson 90 acres bordering on "Harbour Rouse" creek (Oak Creek) and St. Michaels River. In the rent roll it is called "Benson's Choice." Adjoining this "at the head of a branch of Second Creek, was 'Bogg's Hole,' which also became the land of James Benson. His land was now accessible to both rivers, the Choptank and St. Michaels. These two tracts are important because James Benson later owned the entire area. "Maiden Point," "Fox Harbour," "Benson's Enlargement" (Solitude) and part of "Spencer Hall."

Strange as it may seem, there is no record of a warrant for the land on the river shore of "Maiden Point" until the late 1600's. Then there is recorded "Wither's Range" surveyed for Samuel Wither, 26th Oct. 1694, on the south side of St. Michaels river adjoining "Maiden Point." Samuel Wither's daughter, Margaret, married Dr. (Capt.) James Benson and, through this marriage and subsequent purchases, much of the land passed to the Benson family. It remained in their possession during the first years of 1700. (Calvert Rent Roll, Maryland Historical Society)

These first settlers on "Maiden Point" seemed to have been more interested in land south of the Chester River and the Isle of Kent than in Talbot. Eventually they disposed of their holdings here and went there to live.

John Reynolds, planter, conveyed to James Benson, Chyrurgion in the seventh year of Charles, the third Lord Baltimore, (1682), "for 7000 pounds of tobacco, all that tract of land 'Fox's Harbour' 50 acres." James Benson devised this to his daughter,



Anne, who married James Spencer of Kent. These are the forebears of the Spencers in Talbot County who founded "Spencer Hall."

"Charles Hollingsworth, 1671, came to Court and acknowledged to Humphrey Davenport for 8000 pounds of tobacco land lying in St. Michaels river on the south side beginning at the mouth of a creek and running for breadth toward the head of a cove, PART of a tract called 'Maiden Point'."

Because of this transaction, there arose much misunderstanding in later years. It appears he had previously executed a deed of gift:

"Be it known that I, Charles Hollingsworth, in the Province of Maryland County of Talbot for divers good causes and reasonable considerations by me in hand already provided doo alienate and convey to John Elis of the Isle of Kent a parcel of land of a patent called 'Maiden Point' running by a house called 'Foxes Harbour' with full consent of my wife Damvis (?)." (Talbot County Land Records, Liber 1, folio 333).

"Maiden Point" commanded a wide view of the river from its mouth at Tilghman's Point to the bend at Hunting Creek. During the late 1600's these hardy, venturesome traders and planters must have had interesting experiences scanning the water for the ships sailing in with their strange cargoes. There were the shallops, small boats used on the rivers of the Eastern Shore and the Bay. No doubt these were the boats trading between Kent and Talbot. Then, too, there were the sloops and brigantines engaged in coast-wide trade, and manned by seafaring men from many distant lands. In their pockets were curious foreign coins, doubloons and pieces of eight. Some of these occasionally are found in old buildings. Maryland's medium of exchange was tobacco, — tobacco for land and commodities. A shallop at that time "together with the saile riggin and oars was well worth fourteen hundred weight of tobacco and cask."

“Maiden Point” in the early 1700’s was soon to be affected by the trend of events in the Province and in England. When William and Mary ascended the throne, the authority of Charles Calvert, the third Lord Baltimore, was overthrown. Maryland became a Royal Province and a Royal Governor was appointed. At the first Assembly an Act pertaining to Religion was passed and the Anglican Church was established, “for the service of Almighty God and Establishment of the Protestant religion within this Province.” Gov. Copley then appointed the ministers from a list of nominees made by the Bishop of London. In 1708 the Rev. Henry Nichols of Jesus College, Oxford, became the Rector of St. Michael’s Parish by appointment of the Bishop of London.

Dr. James Benson died in 1709. By his will he devised the several parts of “Maiden Point” to two sons and a daughter. The lines in the surveys were indefinite and descriptions of metes and bounds were often expressed by “through the woods” or “into the swamp.” It is a question if anyone at that time really knew the extent of his land holdings. At any rate three years after their father’s death three of the children disposed of the land. The document records the following:

“1712, Between Edmund Benson, Ann Benson, and Perry Benson and Henry Nicols, Clerk, for 25000 pounds of tobacco Whereas Samuel Withers late of Talbot County, Gentlemen deceased was possessed of singular and sundry tracts of land did by his will devise them unto Edmund, Anne and Perry do convey them to Henry Nicols and heires 330 acres.”  
(Land Records, L. 13, f. 645)

But the sale was not final until 1731. Mary Hines, daughter of Robert Elis persisted in pushing her claim. The following indenture, though somewhat vague, seems to make the Rev. Henry Nichols the rightful owner:

“June 10, 1731. Between Perry Benson, carpenter, of one part and Henry Nicols, Clerk of the other part, Whereas Edmund, Anne and Perry Benson did bargain, sell and convey to Henry Nicols a parcel of land now in the possession of

Henry Nicols a certain Mary Hines of Queen Anne's county, daughter of John Ellis did claim part of the land by virtue of a conveyance by Charles Hollingsworth, to John Elis, Apr. 9, 1668, which claim and right was purchased by Perry Benson 1720. This indenture witnesseth that Perry Benson in consideration of 25000 pounds of tobacco sold to Henry Nicols a tract of land known as "Maiden Point," "Maiden Point Addition," "Little Neck" and "Withers' Range." (Ibid, Liber 13, folio 645)

The Rev. Henry Nicols made this his plantation home and the Rectory. The dwelling house site, now the home of Gen. Arms, most likely was always where it is now. The low story and a half part of the house is typical of the style of architecture in the first years of 1700 and was, no doubt, built under the direction of the Rector. The well-preserved old house in the yard may have been the home of Samuel Withers.

The Rev. Henry Nicols died in 1748, but "Maiden Point" remained in possession of his descendants until 1812, so that it was owned by the Nicols family exactly one hundred years. His will executed 1747 is in part:

"I desire to be buried in my Parish Church. To eldest son, Henry, my prayer book; to Charles, 'Partnership,' in Tuckahoe; to James plantation where I now reside and a moiety to Jonathon; to wife Dorothy, plantation called 'Galloway;' to William, Small plantation on the Thread Avon." (Wills, Hall of Records, Annapolis)

The will reveals how extensive were his land holdings. He was rector 40 years, 1708 to 1748.

The various Religious Acts, passed after the Church was under the jurisdiction of the Crown, all had one undesirable feature in regard to revenue, the tax of forty pounds of tobacco per poll for the support of the clergyman. This naturally met much opposition from Catholics, Quakers and dissenters of every class. Members of the clergy became wealthy and often lived extravagantly.

One of the two sons, James or Jonathon, to whom "Maiden Point" was bequeathed, had one son, Henry and two daughters, Elizabeth and Sarah. One daughter married a Troup. Sarah (Nicols) Troup had four children, namely John Irvine Troup, Henry Troup, Mary Troup and Rebecca Troup.

James or Jonathan Nicols

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	Elizabeth		Sarah Nicols Toup		
<hr style="width: 100%;"/> Henry of Balto. Resurvey "Maiden Point" in 1873		<hr style="width: 100%;"/> John Irvine	<hr style="width: 100%;"/> Henry	<hr style="width: 100%;"/> Mary Troup m. Levin Hicks Campbell	<hr style="width: 100%;"/> Rebecca Troup m. Josiah Polk

The great granddaughter of Rev. Henry Nicols, Mary Troup, married Levin Hicks Campbell of Dorchester County. After her death her husband filed a petition in the Land Office requesting that he be issued a patent for "Maiden Point" and setting forth his claims:

"To the honorable William Kilty, Chancellor of Maryland and Judge of the Western Shore Land Office: Your petitioner Levin Hicks Campbell respectfully represents

That a certain Henry Nicols resurveyed a certain tract of land, 1783, and that afterwards he and his two sisters, Elizabeth and Sarah, executed a deed to Henry Troup, son of Sarah."

Henry, Mary and Rebecca departed this life intestate and without issue.

"Your petitioner states to your Honor that on the 25th day of September, 1811, the aforesaid John Irvine Troup conveyed by deed all his individual part of said lands in fee to your petitioner and so also did Josiah Polk and Rebecca Polk."

"Your petitioner states that no patent has ever been issued on the said certificate of resurvey. — He prays your

Honor to grant him a patent thereon and to pass and issue an order that the same shall forthwith issue."

Thomas H. Bowie

(Hall of Records, Annapolis)

Levin Campbell received the patent Oct. 24, 1812. Within a few weeks he found a purchaser. John Barnett lived on the adjoining farm and he bought it for his son, Alexander.

"Be it remembered that on the 21st day of November 1812 the following deed was received and enrolled as follows to wit: Between Levin Campbell of Dorchester Co. in the State of Maryland Councillor at Law of the one part and John Barnett of the other, consideration \$6667.50 a tract of land on Miles River consisting of 400 A."

Signed     Levin Campbell

(Land Records, Easton, Liber 35, f. 323)

The Barnetts, John Barnett, the father of Alexander, the son owned the plantation until 1860. Skirting the river shore and reaching deep into the woods it was indeed a plantation with its row of quarters for servants. As the consideration, when purchased by them, was less than \$7000, it is reasonable to suppose that John Barnett built the large part of the house. This is a good example of the Talbot type of architecture in the early 1800's. The original or lower part of the house was no doubt built a hundred years earlier.

In 1860 Alexander Barnett conveyed to Hugh A. Cooper of Baltimore 290 A. The record runs "Beginning at the seventeenth line of the farm devised to Maria Barnett, daughter of John Barnett, sister of Alexander to Hammond's land and to line of James Spencer (J. W. Everest) consideration \$16000. By this transaction 110 acres were taken from the original "Maiden Point."



Capt. Hugh A. Cooper was, at that time, promotor and president of the Eastern Shore Steamboat Company. The Company had wharves at Annapolis and Baltimore and owned small packet steamboats. The venture did not succeed and he became insolvent. Many stockholders of Talbot County as well as Capt. Cooper lost money.

An energetic businessman and prominent in Baltimore public affairs, Hugh Auld Cooper was the son of Rosanna Auld and the grandson of Col. Hugh Auld of Deep Water Point.

“Maiden Point” once the home of the Rector and the meeting place of the Vestry, during the occupancy of the Coopers, became the scene of social entertainment. The Hammonds of “Solitude,” the John Harpers of “Beverly” and other neighbors were frequent dinner guests.

After first disposing of 99 acres of his land, Hugh A. Cooper, gave a mortgage to James Benson of St. Michaels, for \$15000. Two years later, 1869, the farm was conveyed to the mortgage, and Capt. Cooper returned to Baltimore. In 1878 James Benson sold to Samuel J. Slater 125 acres, reserving the woodland which he afterwards sold to James Harrison. The Slaters lived in the plantation dwelling house more than forty years and the farm became known as the “Slater Farm.”

In 1866 to Richard S. Dodson of Baltimore, Capt. Hugh A. Cooper sold 80 acres of clear land plus woodland 19 acres, consideration \$6600. This is the present “Maiden Point.” There were no improvements on this part of the tract except a small tenant house on the shore.

Richard Dodson, son of Robert Auld Dodson and Hester Ann (Keithly) Dodson was born and reared in St. Michaels, on the land where Mrs. Norman Shannahan now lives. At the early age of seventeen he was captain of his father’s schooner which made regular trips to Baltimore. While in Baltimore he met a famous hotel proprietor and, through his influence, became interested in hotel management. Success followed him and he returned to his



home town often and invested extensively in land and property. He made a home at "Maiden Point" for his father and mother and in later years, his wife and family spent their summers there.

No native son, who left St. Michaels and achieved prosperity, ever remembered so well and helped so much his friends in the town of his boyhood days. When a serious illness or a great misfortune came upon them, he often returned to lend assistance.

The 400 acres which composed the original tract, laid out in long narrow strips, parallel to the river shore, are now three farms, "Rollyston," "Armsley," and "Maiden Point," each sharing a view of St. Michaels River.













